University, which was embodied in 1920 from two colleges which had been affiliated to Calcutta University, now consisted of four constituent colleges—University College, Judson College, Teachers' Training College and Medical College. Of these, the Teachers' Training College led a self-sufficient collegiate life of its own, with its normal school, its Anglo-Vernacular high school and its graduate students. Judson College which was an American missionary college contained a very large percentage of Karens and Christians. Medical College was situated a good distance away from the University estate, and in any case students did not enter its buildings until their third year. For the great majority of Burman Buddhists, therefore, the University meant University College with its strength of about 200 women and 800 men students. 873

The buildings of the college were laid out on a garden estate of the University, about four miles out of Rangoon. There were brick and wood residential halls grouped in units, great blocks of teaching buildings in a series of rectangular arms from a main block, a University Convocation Hall in the form of a massive square structure laid heavily at the head of a fine central drive, a narrower and lofty University Library building, a Union Hall, a gymnasium with bright dancing murals on its outside walls, and later a Buddhist Congregational Hall with the traditional tiered roofs in concrete. Opposite was Judson College in the same style, but with the scale greatly contracted. The whole arrangement was set out with stretches of grassy lawns, gardens, great trees and the thousand smaller trees, which had been planted when the estate was first laid, and residential houses for the staff; and bordering all were the Kokine Lakes, extensive stretches of water with pretty banks and wooded islands. The University estate could have been developed into a self-sufficient garden city for it had already a post office, a bookshop and a small hospital of its own, and a servants' village stretched out till it joined the Teachers' Training College not far away. Although the blocks of modern structures could have been built in a more Burmese style, there was enough romance in these surroundings for those of us who had come from English schools. The Convocation Hall was guarded by two giant bronze gryphons squatting on slabs of concrete, in the way that lion gryphons guard all our pagodas. The names of the residential halls were the names of ancient capitals of Burma—Prome, Tagaung, Pagan and Ava; Pegu, Thaton, Sagaing and Inya. The bus service connecting the University with Rangoon town was marked with the naga—the dragon of our mythology and a noble beneficent creature. It was the most elevated of the Rangoon Electric Tramway's attempts at symbols for the illiterate users of buses—an aeroplane for Mingaladon 873 873 494 212

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where the airport of Rangoon was situated, a horse's head for the suburb of Insein where wild horses used to graze before the area was cleared and built up, a prawn for the suburb of Pasundaung which name means "Mountain of Prawns" and a naga for the *Tegatho*, the Taxila of learning.

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Burmese girls and boys came to this University from the age of sixteen upwards. They studied English and Burmese and a combination of three other subjects for two years, reducible to one for more promising students, and then took an Intermediate Arts or Science examination. After this, a small percentage read an Honours Course for three years, and the great majority took a B.A. or a B.Sc. with a combination of three subjects. There were facilities for an M.A. course, a Law Degree, and an Engineering Degree in a special Engineering College endowed by the Burma Oil Company. For graduates who wished to return to cram for a competitive examination for one of the government services, there was a useful system of minor tutorship posts which, originally paying Rs. 120/- per month, had been split up into two or three posts paying Rs. 40/- to Rs. 60/- for about four to six hours of work per week. This enabled students to have an extra year or two of preparation without any support from home, because boarding fees in any of the halls amounted to Rs. 24/- only. Indeed for the richer classes of Burmese people, life at the University was one of the cheapest ways of passing years in pleasant surroundings, and only the existing rules prevented some from continuing their adolescence into their late thirties. One of my cousins who showed such promise that he matriculated at fifteen, became a rowing man with much money to spend after he joined the University and spent altogether fifteen years as an undergraduate, dodging from one college to another, alternating the arts and the sciences as a reason for his long stay. My uncle Kyaw Din, who carried off the prize of the year in his Intermediate examination, subsequently spent seven years getting his B.A. because he was the best footballer of his day.

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Although there were students here and there who were buried in books either from a love of learning or from being the only breadwinner of a family, my remembrance of University College, Rangoon, is of a great mass of boys and girls who tried to get a passable degree round examination time, but were otherwise submerged in a flood of love and dramatic entertainment. The various associations of arts and sciences, religious and racial fraternities, were more social than intellectual in their activities, but in the Union there was no lack of exciting and impassioned discussions. Here it was that Thakin Nu, Foreign Minister during the Japanese occupation, and Major-General Aung San, leader of the Burmese National Army, harangued us as junior students. Here there was such fierce heartburning about agrarian troubles, labour strikes at the

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I

THE VILLAGE SETTING AND THE PEOPLE

Tadagale is a suburban community of Lower Burma, about four and one half miles north of the city center of Rangoon, chief port and national capital of the Union of Burma. To reach the village most readily one travels by automobile northward from the city along Prome Road, a main highway, to the junction with Kokine Road, beyond the city limit, on to which one turns eastward. After a quarter mile or so, one again goes northward on to a bumpy, poorly surfaced road which soon becomes dirt and terminates abruptly, after another quarter mile, at a small bridge. Tadagale means 'small bridge,' and it is after this bridge that the village is named. A few steps walk over the bridge brings one almost to the center of Tadagale. (See map on following page.)

Tadagale is more or less a 'line' type village, about 3000 yards in length. The domestic dwelling area is constituted by houses and granaries strung along the sides of a main dirt path which is just wide enough for a single bullock cart — or a jeep — to pass without scraping the bushes and trees. This area is heavily shaded from the intense tropical sun by many trees that grow in the household compounds and along the path; palms and banyans are the most prominent types. The houses are rectangular in shape, with low, slanting roofs, and platform-like porches in front. Among the more prosperous families of the village it is not unusual to find houses of plank construction, with roofs of corrugated iron. More frequently, houses are made of bamboo matted sides and palm thatched roofs. Every two or three houses share a well, which is simply an unlined and uncovered hole of perhaps ten to twelve feet in depth. In almost every compound there is a vegetable garden, from which the family supplies itself and realizes some cash income by the sale of any surplus.

To the east of Tadagale's dwelling area, perhaps five hundred yards distant and running parallel to it, is a railroad line, which begins in Rangoon and terminates at Mingaladon, about five miles north of Tadagale. A small railroad station is located at the eastern terminus of the path on which one finds oneself immediately after crossing the bridge that leads into the village. The villagers do not use the railroad nearly so much as they use buses, which run from Tadagale to Rangoon frequently.

Beyond the railroad line, still farther east, lie the paddy fields, extending out to the winding Pazundaung Creek. This creek begins at the southeastern tip of Rangoon, where the Rangoon and Pegu rivers join, and flows in a twisting course northward to separate Rangoon and the heavily populated area immediately north of the city from the sparsely settled area to the east.

Tadagale's climate is that of the tropical monsoon belt, with three well-defined seasons. From the end of October to about the end of February is the Dry Season, characterized by the absence of rain, with cool mornings and evenings. The daily maximum temperature is in the 80's and the humidity is moderate. English-speaking Burmese call this season winter; at night it is cool enough to sleep under one light blanket. The Hot Season commences at the beginning of March and lasts until June. Temperatures rise to daily maxima in the middle to high 90's, the earth is parched and cracked, and the loose dirt on the village paths, caught by occasional breezes, forms choking

243 led around in circular fashion until the grain is thoroughly separated from the stalks. A pronged hoe is then drawn over the stalks to further the separation, after which the bullocks further stamp upon them. When the grain appears to be full separated from the stalks it is swept up into large heaps, while the stalks are put aside for use as cattle fodder.

Winnowing apparatus consists of a tripod of bamboo poles, from the top of which is suspended a plaited round tray of wide weave. Basketsful of grain are handed up to a man who stands on a platform, often an old barrel or a chair, and empties them on to the tray. As he shakes the tray the grain falls through to the ground, while any chaff is carried away by the wind.

The paddy for household use may then be allowed to dry further before being sent by boat down Pazundaung Creek to be milled. In a few households the paddy for home consumption is husked by a foot-operated pounding device, or by a large, hand-operated mortar and pestle. If there is any surplus, beyond the requirements of home consumption, seed, payment of laborers and debts, it is sold to nearby millers who come to purchase it.

• 494 3. Bus Operation. Forty-four men of the community are principally occupied as bus drivers or fare-collectors. The latter are known as 'spares' in the local terminology. Because of the total destruction of public transportation facilities during World War II in Rangoon and the surrounding area, large numbers of surplus military vehicles have been converted into buses. These buses are owned individually or by small groups of partners. The Tadagale men who engage in bus operation ply between the village, which is a terminus, and Rangoon. Their vehicles are, for the most part, in poor repair, and breakdowns along the route are not uncommon. No regular time schedule is followed; rather, they begin a trip when fully loaded, which is to say extremely tightly packed with passengers. By carrying maximum loads, and by charging a fare of 6 annas (ca. 8 cents), the bus operators are able to make a profit, despite the high cost of fuel (ca. 47 cents per Imperial gallon) and of repairs.

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464 4. Field Labor. Thirty-eight villagers make their livings mainly by field labor. During the planting and harvesting seasons they work steadily for cultivators, either in Tadagale or in nearby communities. They are paid in kind or in cash, seldom in combination. During the growing season, August to November, and again, between the end of the harvest and the beginning of the planting season, these people must depend on other temporary jobs to round out their livings.

234 5. Dairy Farming. This occupation is carried on exclusively by the small
563 group of Indians in Tadagale, who possess herds of water buffalo and cattle.
443 Fresh milk is taken daily by bus, in large metal containers, to Rangoon, where it is sold for cash, mostly to Muslim restaurants. The Burmese inhabitants of Tadagale make but slight use of milk and there is virtually no market for it in the village.

265 6. Selling of Prepared Foods. The preparation and itinerant selling of certain Burmese foods supports twenty persons, of whom many are women. Because of the Burmese habit of informal, occasional eating between the two regular daily meals, food sellers do a considerable business. They are invariably present at the pwes, outdoor dramatic presentations staged during holidays and on other festive occasions.

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If the umbrella falls down it indicates that the spirit has departed and cannot return. The person who performs this ritual must not talk to anyone en route to the cemetery. 764

On the seventh day a ceremony takes place. The monks come to the house to eat and chant prayers. They are given offerings for their own use and a special tray containing white thread. The monks hold the thread, which symbolizes good, while they chant. The people present are seated before the monks, repeating the prayers and precepts after them. The deceased person is supposed to be sitting on the mat prepared for him and benefiting from this ceremony. Then the people are fed, the monks depart, and the influences of death are considered to be banished. The thread is kept in the house. 764 769

Graves are not visited, nor is there any upkeep of the cemetery, for folk belief has it that the tidying of graves will cause more people to die. The dead are commemorated by the meritorious act of feasting the Buddhist monks.

Associations

Bus Union. Owners of buses plying between Tadagale and Rangoon are organized into a union. In terms of its functions, this organization might be more fittingly termed a mutual protective and insurance association. These are to prevent outsiders from infringing on their route and competing with them; payment of damages in case of accidents between members' buses and other vehicles or persons; payment of any costs of litigation that arise in connection with accidents; and maintenance of a repair shop and mechanic in the village. Members of the union pay an initial sum to join, plus monthly dues and a small toll fee for each trip that is made. 441 444

Peasants Union. The Tadagale Peasants Union is a constituent body of the All Burma Peasants Union and operates directly under the Insein Division of the parent organization. Some fifty to sixty households in Tadagale are members. When the head of a family or household joins, the union regards all its members as union members. In theory, meetings are supposed to occur once a month, but in fact take place at irregular intervals, whenever a problem arises that is considered sufficiently important to warrant a meeting. Commonly this is a dispute between members over land. If opinion remains divided after considerable discussion of a dispute or other issue, the union meeting votes by written ballot. 467 427 185

The more long-run aims of the Peasants Union concern rent and taxes of cultivators. Protests and petitions are sent to the government when it is felt taxes are too high. The union was characterized as 'an organization that is against the landlords.' At the time of our research, its aim was to reduce the landowners' share of the produce to one-third from two-thirds. The union also favored land nationalization, under which it was believed rent would be paid in a just amount to the government. Just where the Peasants Union fitted in with existing political party programs and alignments in the country at large it was not, for various reasons, feasible to investigate.

Ceremonial Assistance Groups. For purposes of rendering help at such ceremonies as weddings, funerals and initiations, the villagers are divided into informal groups. These are: men's group; married women's group; and unmarried girls' group. The men's group does the heavier tasks, such as chopping and carrying firewood, erecting ceremonial structures, and preparing 575 476

226 438 484 [431] oranges, guava fruit, mangosteen fruit - together worth about forty or fifty rupees. When he arrived at Pathee this was distributed among the members of his family, and also some relatives and the phongyis. On one such trip he made Rs. 2700/- which he carried back hidden away in a jar of salt.

●494 485 U Myaing never came in to Rangoon purely for a visit. Besides bringing down fish, U Myaing also came to Rangoon before the war to buy some motor parts and accessories such as tyres, tubes, etc. which they could not obtain in Pathee village or in Pantanaw town. At that period in his life U Myaing used to drive a bus between Pathee and the village on the bank of the river across from Pathee. There was a cart track for a road, and they used to carry passengers at a rupee per head. In the rains this cart track became impossible and so they traversed this route only from TA-ZAUNG-MON to KASON months. U Myaing worked on this route for three summers. In the rains they shifted operations to the Maubin Ye Le route, which was a 10 mile journey, and occasionally the 10 mile route from Ye Le to HSE-DAING-

[491] MAW. He worked at these places for two rainy seasons, from WASO right up till the month of TA-ZAUNG-MON. The bus was owned by his cousin who collected all the earnings for each day. At that time bus drivers were hired at Rs. 45/- a month, plus sweet tea, food, shelter and one packet of cigarettes a day. "In Pathee all the houses were too large and could accomodate a great many more people than they actually did. This was because each one erected his own building after the example of the other houses in the village. The person who hired the bus driver merely installed him in his home".

[589] This was when U Myaing was 17 or 18 years old. He was not paid anything, but the family was provided with everything they needed - food, clothes, etc. (U Myaing was still unmarried and the family

[582] consisted of two sisters, his mother and himself. (He did not marry

[431] till the age of thirty.) Both U Myaing and Daw Aw Zar estimated that the things they received from the bus owner would have amounted to much more than forty five rupees' worth.